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APPLICATION OF

COLUMBIA GAS OF VIRGINIA, INC.

CASE NO. PUE980287

For a general rate increase

HEARING EXAMINER'S RULING

March 1, 1999

On May 15, 1998, Columbia Gas of Virginia, Inc. ("Columbia Gas" or "the Company") filed an application for authority to increase its rates and charges for gas service and to revise its tariff. The proposed rates and charges will produce additional annual revenues of \$5,262,273 over rates and charges which took effect under bond on October 18, 1997, in Case No. PUE970455. On June 10, 1998, the Commission entered an Order Suspending Rates and Setting Hearing in which it directed the Company to give notice, established a procedural schedule, assigned the matter to a Hearing Examiner, and scheduled the matter for public hearing on January 12, 1999.

On December 14, 1998, Columbia Gas, by counsel, filed a Motion for Extension of Time to File Rebuttal Testimony and Continuance ("Motion"). In its Motion, Columbia Gas maintained that many of the issues involved in this case will be decided by the Commission in Case No. PUE970455. Thus, delaying the remainder of the procedural schedule would permit the parties to streamline the issues in the current case. No other party objected to the Motion. Therefore, the Hearing Examiner's ruling dated December 15, 1998, generally continued the filing date for the Company's rebuttal testimony and the date for the evidentiary hearing.

On February 19, 1999, the Commission issued its final order in Case No. PUE970455. On the same day, in this proceeding, the Commission issued an order referring additional issues, as discussed in its final order in Case No. PUE970455, for consideration in this case. Specifically, the Commission directed Columbia Gas to study the cost effectiveness of converting its Metered Propane Service ("MPS") customers to natural gas service and to consider the impact of conversion on overall purchased gas costs as well as its non-gas requirements. In addition, the Commission directed consideration of continued recovery of the current subsidy for MPS. These issues are to be resolved in this Case No. PUE980287. I now find that a revised procedural schedule and hearing date should be established. Accordingly,

IT IS DIRECTED:

(1) That the evidentiary hearing in this matter is hereby rescheduled to June 9, 1999, at 10:00 a.m. in the Commission's Second Floor Courtroom;

(2) That, on or before April 16, 1999, Columbia Gas shall file with the Clerk an original and fifteen copies of its supplemental testimony and exhibits and shall serve one copy on the Staff and all parties;

(3) That, on or before April 30, 1999, each protestant shall file with the Clerk an original and fifteen copies of its supplemental testimony and exhibits and shall serve a copy on the Company, Staff, and all other parties;

(4) That, on or before May 21, 1999, the Commission Staff shall file with the Clerk an original and fifteen copies of its supplemental testimony and exhibits and shall serve a copy on all parties; and

(5) That, on or before June 2, 1999, Columbia Gas shall file with the Clerk an original and fifteen copies of its rebuttal testimony and exhibits and shall serve a copy on Staff and all parties.

Alexander F. Skirpan, Jr.
Hearing Examiner